



FUR AND THE FUR-TRADE. I.



"VOYAGEURS DES BOIS"—CANADIAN FUR-HUNTERS.

At the present season of the year, when fur forms so beautiful and agreeable an addition to our customary out-door attire, a succinct account of the Fur-Trade may be acceptable to our readers. It contains so many lively and exciting details that while reading the various authorities necessary to our brief compilation, we have been tempted to pause, under the impression that the details belonged rather to fiction than to truth. That any set of men, accustomed to the usages of society, more or less civilized, should voluntarily abandon the comforts derived therefrom, and wander through wildernesses and sterile plains, the companions of wild beasts, or of men almost equally wild, does indeed seem strange. Yet it is not the less true. At this present moment there are many Englishmen, and a still greater number of Scotchmen, living in the remotest wilds of North America; hundreds, nay even thousands of miles distant from any regular town. They are not driven thither by disgrace; they are not influenced by that love of glory and national honour which excite the soldier or the sailor; they do not, like Humboldt and Bonpland, Audubon and Richardson, contend with hardships for the sake of extending the bounds of scientific knowledge; they are actuated by the same feelings as the merchant and the trader; they work for worldly wealth. The persons here alluded to are the agents and clerks of the fur-companies, and their office is to collect from the Indian fur-hunters the skins of fur-bearing animals, many of which being killed at a distance of three thousand miles from the regular European towns, the hunters could not forward the skins were it not that the agents of the companies are stationed at forts or posts, established at various parts of the interior of the continent. A system of barter is thus set on foot, the European agent giving blankets, guns, and other articles, in exchange for furs, the dealings being often conducted more particularly by

a rude class of men, who are half Indian, half European. The details of this system are full of that which, were they not undeniably true, we should term romance; and it is our purpose to present a view of the subject in this and a succeeding Supplement. But in order to give more completeness to our object, we shall rapidly review the usages of society, in respect of wearing fur-dresses, usages which have given rise to the mode of life hinted at above.

SECTION I.

USE OF FURS FOR GARMENTS. VARIETIES OF FURS.

RESPECTING the first use of furs for clothing, Beckmann says:—"Men first ventured on the cruelty of killing animals, in order that they might devour them as food, and use the skins to shelter themselves from the severity of the weather. At first these skins were used raw, without any preparation, and many nations did not till a late period arrive at the art of rendering them softer and more pliable, durable, and convenient. As long as mankind traded only for necessities, and paid no attention to ornament, they turned the hairy side towards the body, but as the art of dressing skins was not then understood, the flesh side must have given to this kind of clothing, when the manners or the people began to be more refined, an appearance which could not fail of exciting disgust: to prevent which the Ozolæ inverted the skins, and wore the hair outwards." From the time when, for appearance-sake, the hairy side of a furred skin was worn externally, may be dated, the use of furs in the sense which we now apply to the term. The custom was not universal, however, even in Imperial Rome, for Juvenal, when speaking of a miserly person, says,— "To guard himself against the cold, he does not wear the costly woollen clothing of the luxurious Romans, but the

skins of animals, and these even inverted, that is to say, with the hairy side turned inwards, without caring whether the appearance be agreeable or not."

The sheep, whose wool forms the material for nearly all woollen clothing, came originally from Africa, where felted garments and tents were probably first introduced, and many centuries must have elapsed before the tender sheep could be conveyed to and reared in the northern countries, where thick and immense forests produced in abundance a great variety of those animals which were capable of supplying the best furs; where mankind increased but slowly, and applied principally to hunting; and where the people lived too widely scattered to be led soon to the cultivation of the manufacturing arts by a reciprocation of experience and invention. The northern nations, therefore, clothed themselves in the raw skins of animals, a long time after the southern tribes were acquainted with the spinning and weaving of wool. The earliest of the northern tribes which poured down upon Greece and Rome are described as being clothed in fur-dresses, of which the hairy side was turned inwards; but the later tribes of invaders appear to have made an advance towards a more cleanly appearance, having the hairy side of their fur-dresses turned outward. The chiefs among them even decorated their fur dresses with some taste, and the Romans acquired from them a taste for wearing furs, the scarcity of the supply, and the distance from whence it had to be brought, being sufficient to render furs a luxurious mark of distinction among people of rank.

A curious interchange of custom succeeded; the Romans gradually became accustomed to wear fur-dresses, such as the Northerners had worn, while the latter by degrees quitted their furs for the woollen garments which the Romans had taught them to make. In the year 397, however, the Emperor Honorius forbade Gothic dresses, especially furs, to be worn either in Rome or within the jurisdiction of the city, but such a law, as in most similar cases, appears to have been very little attended to. The steps by which the custom of wearing furs spread from country to country can with difficulty be now ascertained. A modern writer on the fur-trade states:—"We find that about the year 522, when Totila, king of the Visigoths, reigned in Italy, the Suethons, a people of modern Sweden, found means, by the help of the commerce of numberless intervening people, to transmit, for the use of the Romans, the precious skins of the sable. As luxury advanced, furs, even of the most valuable species, were used by princes as linings for their tents. Thus, Marco Polo, in 1252, found those of the Cham of Tartary lined with ermines and sables, the last of which he calls *sibelines* and *zambolines*: he says that these and other precious furs were brought from countries far north, from the 'land of darkness,' and regions almost inaccessible, by reason of morasses and ice. The Welsh set a high value on furs as early as the reign of Howell Dhu, who began his reign about 940. In the next age furs became the fashionable magnificence of Europe. When Godfrey of Boulogne and his followers appeared before the Emperor Alexis Comnenus, in their way to the Holy Land, he was struck with the richness of their fur-dresses." It has been remarked that the advance of luxury in France must have been very rapid since the time of Charlemagne, who contented himself with the plain fur of the otter. Our Henry the First wore furs, yet in his distress was obliged to change them for warm Welsh flannel. By the year 1337, the luxury had attained such a pitch that Edward the Third enacted that all persons who could not spend a hundred pounds a year should be absolutely prohibited the use of this species of finery: these furs, from their great expense, must have been brought from foreign countries, obtained through the medium of the Italian states, which carried on a great traffic at that time. It is a curious circumstance that the northern parts of Asia then supplied us with almost every valuable kind of fur, whereas at present we send, by means of our possessions in North America, furs, to an immense amount, to China, where this species of luxury is highly valued.

The kinds of fur employed in the manufacture of the various articles of dress in use among us, are very numerous. We shall first mention that of the ermine, or as it is called by way of pre-eminence, "the precious ermine." This animal is found in the cold regions of Europe and Asia. North America produces an animal, identical with the ermine, but whose fur is greatly inferior in value: this animal is called the stoat. The fur of the ermine is known by being of a pure white throughout, except the tip of the tail, which is black; these tails are fastened at intervals into

the skins and give the rich spotted appearance to the fur as it is worn among us. This is a small animal, the whole length from the nose to the tip of the tail being only about fourteen or fifteen inches, while the available part of the fur is not more than ten or twelve inches. The older the animal, the better is the fur it produces. The method of taking the ermine is by snares or traps, and sometimes they are shot, while running, with blunt arrows.

The sable is another animal much prized in the fur-trade. This is a native of Northern Europe and Siberia. The length of the animal is from eighteen to twenty inches, and the best skins are procured by the Samoieds, and in Yakutsk, Kamtschatka, and Russian Lapland. Some naturalists consider the sable to be merely a variety of the pine marten.

The marten is found in North America, as well as in Northern Asia, and the mountains of Kamtschatka; the European are more highly prized than the American skins, though many among the latter are rich and of a beautiful dark brown olive colour. The fiery fox, so called from its bright red colour, is taken near the north-eastern coast of Asia, and its fur is much valued in that part of the world. The fur of the young sea otter is very beautiful. It is of a rich brown colour, fine, soft, and close, and bears a silky gloss: in the older animal it becomes jet black. These animals were first sought for their fur in the early part of the eighteenth century, and were brought to Western Europe from the Aleutian and Kurile islands, where they are found in great numbers.

The South Shetland Islands were formerly resorted to by vast numbers of seals: in 1821 and 1822, the number of seal skins taken on these islands alone amounted to 320,000. Such, indeed, was the system of extermination that the animal is now almost extinct in that quarter.

The skins of various kinds of bear, fox, racoon, badger, lynx, musk rat, rabbit, hare, and squirrel, are procured in North America. The fur of the black fox, sometimes called the silver fox, is considered the most valuable. The red fox also is an article of export, especially to China, where it is used for trimmings, linings, and robes, and is ornamented in spots or waves with the black fur of the paws. The fur of the silver fox is of a deep lead colour intermingled with long hairs, white at the top, forming a lustrous silver grey. The hides of bison, and of various kinds of deer, also form part of the fur-trade of North America.

One of the most valuable descriptions of fur is that of the beaver, an animal whose sagacity greatly tries the ingenuity of the hunter. By referring to the *Saturday Magazine*, Vol. I., p. 181, the reader will find a short account of this animal. The method of taking the beaver in summer is by a process called trapping. In winter the plan followed is thus related by Hearne: "Persons who attempt to take beavers in winter, should be thoroughly acquainted with their manner of life, otherwise they will have endless trouble to effect their purpose, because they have always a number of holes in the banks which serve them as places of retreat when any injury is offered to their houses, and in general it is in those holes that they are taken. When the beavers which are situated in a small river or creek are to be taken, the Indians sometimes find it necessary to stake the river across, to prevent them from passing; after which they endeavour to find out all their holes or places of retreat in the banks. This requires much practice and experience to accomplish, and is performed in the following manner:—every man being furnished with an ice chisel, lashes it to the end of a small staff about four or five feet long; he then walks along the edge of the banks, and keeps knocking his chisel against the ice. Those who are acquainted with that kind of work, well know the sound of the ice when they are opposite to any of the beavers' holes or vaults. As soon as they suspect any, they cut a hole through the ice big enough to admit an old beaver, and in this manner proceed till they have found out all their places of retreat, or at least as many of them as possible. While the principal men are thus employed, some of the undertrappers and their women are busy in breaking open the house, which at times is no easy task, for I have frequently known these houses to be five or six feet thick, and one in particular was more than eight feet thick in the crown. When the beavers find that their habitations are invaded they fly to their holes in the banks for shelter; and on being perceived by the Indians, which is easily done by attending to the motion of the water, they block up the entrance with stakes of wood, and then haul the beaver out of his hole, either by hand, if they can reach it, or with a large hook made for that purpose, which is fastened to the

end of a long stick. In this kind of hunting, every man has the sole right to all the beavers caught by him in the holes or vaults; and as this is a constant rule, each person takes care to mark such as he discovers, by sticking up a branch of a tree, by which he may know them. All that are caught in the house, are the property of the person who finds it. The beaver is an animal that cannot keep under water long at a time, so that when their houses are broken open, they have but one choice left, either to be taken in their house or their vaults; in general they prefer the latter, for where there is one beaver taken in the house, many thousands are taken in the vaults in the banks."

SECTION II.

RISK OF THE CANADIAN FUR-TRADE. COURREURS DES BOIS. LICENSED TRADERS. TRADING POSTS. TRADING COMMANDERS.

THE reader is probably aware that the first Europeans who made any settlement in Canada were the French, who founded a colony there considerably more than two centuries ago, and remained in possession of it till about eighty years since. The colonists soon found that the environs of Montreal and the other towns were plentifully stocked with animals coated with valuable fur; and the capture of these animals formed an occupation for many of the French colonists. By degrees, the supply near the towns ceased, through the active operations of the colonists; and the Indians of the interior were encouraged to penetrate into the country, accompanied generally by some of the Canadians, who found means to induce the remoter tribes of natives to bring the skins which were most in demand to their settlements, in the way of trade. At intervals large bodies of Indians would come down from the great lakes in a squadron of light canoes, laden with beaver, and other skins. The canoes were then unladen, taken on shore, and their contents arranged in order. A rude camp, made of bark, was then pitched outside the town of Montreal, and a fair opened between the Indians and the Canadians. An audience being demanded of the Governor, he proceeded to hold a conference with the chiefs of the Indians. This conference was conducted in a mode to which the Indians have always been well accustomed. The Indians ranged themselves in semi-circles, seated on the ground, and smoked their pipes in profound silence: speeches were then made: presents were exchanged; and the whole party then proceeded to business with mutual confidence. The Indians bartered their *peltries* (a general name in the fur-countries for all kinds of skins*) with the dealers of Montreal, for arms, kettles, knives, axes, blankets, bright-coloured cloths, and various minor articles; upon all which the dealers are said (and probably with truth,) to have cleared two hundred per cent. profit. Money was never employed on these occasions; and spirituous liquors, which formed at one time one of the articles given by the Canadians in barter for the skins, were afterwards interdicted, on account of the drunken and dissipated scenes which ensued. When the Indians had bartered away their skins, they took leave of the Governor, and paddled up the river Ottawa in their canoes towards the great lakes.

Such was the mode by which Montreal obtained its supply of furs for many years; and out of this system arose a remarkable class of persons, who have been instanced as an illustration of the fact, that it requires much less time for a civilised people to fall into the manners and customs of savage life, than for savages to rise into a state of civilization. This was the case with the *Courreurs des Bois*, or rangers of woods; originally men who had accompanied the Indians in their hunting expeditions, and made themselves acquainted with remote tracts and tribes; and who now became, as it were, pedlars of the wilderness. They were extremely useful to the merchants engaged in the fur-trade, who gave them the necessary credit to proceed on their commercial undertakings. Three or four of these *Courreurs des Bois* would form a joint-stock; purchase arms, provisions, &c., and put their property into a birch-bark canoe. This canoe they worked themselves, and either accompanied the natives in their excursions, or went at once to the country where they knew the furs were to be procured. At length, these voyages extended to twelve, fifteen, or even eighteen months, at the end of which the adventurers returned with rich cargoes of furs.

* When the skins have received no preparation but from the hunters, they are called *peltries*; but when they have had the inner side tawed or tanned, they then become *furs*.

During the short time requisite to settle their accounts with the merchants, and to procure fresh credit, they generally contrived to squander away all their gains, after which they returned to pursue their favourite mode of life: their views being answered, and their labours sufficiently rewarded, by indulging themselves in extravagance and dissipation during the short space of one month in twelve or fifteen.

This indifference about amassing property, and the pleasure of living free from all restraint, soon brought on a licentiousness of manners, which could not long escape the vigilant observation of the French missionaries, who were then in Canada, and who had much reason to complain of these *Courreurs* being a disgrace to the Christian religion: by not only swerving from its duties themselves, but by thus bringing it into disrepute with those of the natives who had become converts to it. They therefore exerted their influence to procure the suppression of this vagrant class of men.

These proceedings gave rise to another step in the machinery of the fur-trade. An order was issued by the French government, prohibiting all persons, on pain of death, from trading into the interior of the country without a licence; but, from the manner in which this licence-system was acted on, the old abuses were continued. The licences were at first granted in writing to persons of respectability; to gentlemen of broken fortunes; to poor but meritorious officers, and their widows. By the terms of each licence, the holder was allowed to fit out two large canoes with merchandise for the upper country; and no more than twenty-five licences were to be issued in any one year. But, by degrees, private licences were granted, and the total number greatly increased.

Many of the holders of licences did not fit out the expedition themselves, but sold the privilege to the fur-merchants, who thereupon employed the *courreurs des bois*, in the following manner:—"The merchant holding the licence would fit out two canoes with a thousand crowns' worth of goods, and put them under the conduct of six *courreurs des bois*, to whom the goods were charged at the rate of fifteen per cent. above the ready-money price in the colony. The *courreurs des bois* in their turn dealt so sharply with the savages, that they generally returned at the end of a year or so with four canoes well-laden, so as to ensure a clear profit of seven hundred per cent., inasmuch that the thousand crowns invested, produced eight thousand. Of this extravagant profit the merchant had the lion's share. In the first place, he would set aside six hundred crowns for the cost of his licence, then a thousand crowns for the cost of the original merchandise. This would leave six thousand four hundred crowns, from which he would take forty per cent. for *bottomry*, (a kind of mortgage of a vessel, by which the owner is enabled to fit her out,) amounting to two thousand five hundred and sixty crowns. The residue would be equally divided among the six wood-rangers, who would thus receive little more than six hundred crowns for all their toils and perils."

As the employment of the wood-rangers led to scenes of lawlessness and debauchery similar to those before complained of, a farther change was made. Military posts were established at the confluence of the different large lakes of Canada; by which course the trade was protected, and the improper conduct of the wood-rangers was, in some measure, checked. Besides this, a number of able and respectable men, who had retired from the army, prosecuted the trade in person, under their respective licences, with great order and regularity, and extended their enterprises inland to an astonishing distance. These gentlemen denominated themselves *commanders*, and not *traders*, though they were entitled to both these characters; their general conduct was such as to secure the respect of the natives, and the obedience of the people necessarily employed in the laborious parts of this undertaking. Among these military posts, the chief was at Michilimackinac, situated at the strait of the same name, which joins Lake Huron to Lake Michigan. It became a great interior mart and place of deposit, at which establishments were formed by some of the regular merchants. This, too, was a rendezvous for the *courreurs des bois*, of whom one set were employed in bringing goods up from Montreal, while others were bringing down *peltries* from the interior. Expeditions for the north, the north-west, and the west, were fitted out at this fort or post; and the *peltries* thence derived were forwarded to Montreal. Michilimackinac, therefore, now filled in part the office which Montreal had formerly filled.

For a long series of years matters proceeded on the

system just sketched forth. No "fur-company" existed in Canada; but individuals embarked in the trade at their pleasure. The head-quarters were at the junctions of some of the great lakes, from whence repeated expeditions of a daring character were made into the interior. The Canadians, however, were not free from competitors. On the south of them the British merchants of New York entered on the field, and inveigled the Indian hunters, and *courreurs des bois*, into their service; while on the north, a more formidable competition was met with in the Hudson's Bay Company, which was established by royal charter, in 1670. As this Company will occupy a share of our attention hereafter, we shall here confine our narrative to the proceedings of the Canadian adventurers.

SECTION III.

TEMPORARY DECLINE OF THE FUR-TRADE BY THE CESSATION OF CANADA TO THE ENGLISH.—ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NORTH-WEST COMPANY.—ITS CONSTITUTION.—PARTNERS AND CLERKS.—SYSTEM OF BARTER.—THE CANADIAN VOYAGEURS.—FITTING OUT AND DEPARTURE OF THE CANOES FROM MONTREAL TO THE LAKES.—DÉCHARGES AND PORTAGES.

No particular change occurred in the mode of conducting the Canadian fur-trade until the important transfer of Canada from the possession of France to that of England, in 1763; but at this period the old channels of communication were greatly disturbed. The trade gradually passed into the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company, who derived great advantages from it, for all the Indians westward of Lake Superior were now obliged to go to them for such articles of English manufacture as they had hitherto procured from the Canadians. But the total cessation of the Canadian trade with the Indians was of short duration; the immense length of the journey from Hudson's Bay to the regions of the Western Indians; the risk of property; the expenses attending such a long transport; and an ignorance of the language of those who, from their experience, must be necessarily employed as the intermediate agents between them and the natives—all conspired to make the maintenance of the traffic on the part of the Hudson's Bay Company, rather difficult. The old *courreurs des bois*, too, were slow to conform to the usages of the British traders, after having been accustomed to the freedom and familiarity of the French Canadian merchants.

In a few years time some of the Canadian houses at Michilimackinac resumed their expeditions from that town; sending off expeditions beyond the confines of Lake Superior, and gradually re-establishing a trade independent of the Hudson's Bay Company. Individual adventurers began to extend their trips to distances far beyond what had hitherto been attempted. One of these bold men, named Thomas Curry, determined to proceed as far northward as the frost would allow; and having procured guides and interpreters he proceeded as far as the Cedar Lake; whence he returned with a valuable cargo of furs. The success of this adventure induced Mr. James Finlay to undertake a similar expedition in the following year; he engaged four canoes; proceeded beyond the point attained by Curry; and returned with a very valuable cargo of furs. Mr. Joseph Frobisher was the next adventurer; he made two canoe voyages, still farther north-west than either Curry or Finlay, and made large profits by his speculations. Mr. Pond, another adventurer, was entrusted by others who entered into a joint-stock speculation, with the conduct of an expedition destined to penetrate farther than any which had yet been despatched. He succeeded in reaching Lake Athabasca, a spot about midway between Lake Superior and the Frozen Ocean; and like his predecessors, succeeding in obtaining from the Indians an exceedingly valuable supply of furs.

But notwithstanding these examples of individual success, the fur-trade was in a very unsatisfactory state among the Canadians. The Hudson's Bay Company had commenced their operations with an energy never before exhibited in that quarter; whereby trading-posts, belonging to the company, were established at nearly all the spots where the Canadian adventurers had posts. There were also other circumstances which had been thus explained by Sir Alexander Mackenzie, himself an enterprising agent in the fur-trade. "The trade was carried on in a very distant country, out of the reach of legal restraint, and where there was a free scope given to any ways or means in attaining advantage. The consequence was not only the loss of commercial benefit to the persons engaged in it, but of the good opinion of

the natives, and the respect of their men, who were inclined to follow their example; so that what with drinking, carousing, and quarrelling with the Indians along their route and among themselves, they seldom reached their winter quarters; and if they did, it was generally by dragging their property upon sledges, as the navigation was closed up by the frost. When at length they were arrived, the object of each was to injure his rival traders in the opinion of the natives as much as was in his power, by misrepresentation and presents, for which the agents employed were peculiarly calculated. . . . Thus did they waste their credit and their property with the natives, till the first was past redemption, and the last was nearly exhausted; so that towards the spring in each year, the rival parties found it absolutely necessary to join, to make one common stock of what remained, for the purpose of trading with the natives, who could entertain no respect for persons who had conducted themselves with so much irregularity and deceit."

Had matters continued to be conducted on this vicious system on the part of the Canadians, we should probably have had to record the rise of the Hudson's Bay Company to undisputed pre-eminence in the fur-trade of America; but a measure was set on foot which prevented this from taking place. In the winter of 1783-4, the Canadian merchants engaged in the fur-trade resolved to join interests and to form a company. This they accordingly did, and it was soon evident that mutual advantages would be derived by all through this arrangement; many of the traders, however, refused at first to join it, and a bitter and even sanguinary contest ensued between the parties, as to which should have the greater amount of traffic with the Indians. At length all this rivalry ceased, by the opposing adventurers taking shares in the company; and in 1787 was finally established the famous "NORTH-WEST COMPANY." The energy with which this company carried on its operations, the ability and daring perseverance of its agents, and the wide extent of country through which its traffic has been conducted, have combined to give this fur-company greater interest for the general reader than that of any other. We propose therefore, to enter somewhat minutely into the commercial machinery by which the affairs of the company were managed, and into the general mode of dealing between the Indian fur-hunters and the Canadian fur-traders. By so doing, we shall be enabled to pass over more briefly similar details respecting other companies. Sir Alexander Mackenzie was one of the earliest agents of this company; and to his account of the rise and progress of the fur-trade we shall be indebted for many of the details which follow.

The North-West Company was in spirit no more than an association of commercial men agreeing among themselves to carry on the fur trade, unconnected with any other business, although many of the parties engaged had extensive concerns altogether distinct from it. It may be said to have been supported entirely upon credit; for, whether the capital belonged entirely to the proprietor or was borrowed, it equally bore interest, for which the association was annually accountable. The joint-stock of the company consisted of twenty shares, unequally divided among the persons concerned. A certain proportion was held by people who managed the business in Canada, and were called agents of the company. Their duty was to import the necessary goods from England, store them at Montreal, get them made up into articles acceptable to the Indians, and pack them up, and forward them to the interior, and supply the funds that might be wanting for the outfits; for which they received, independent of the profit on their shares, a commission on the amount of the accounts, which they were obliged to make out annually. Two of them went annually to Fort William, the grand dépôt of the company on the western margin of Lake Superior, to manage and transact the business there. They finally received the furs, which they packed up and shipped for England. In fact they formed the monied and commercial partners of the company.

The other partners or shareholders were those who dwelt in the interior country, and who managed the business of the concern with the Indians. They were not supposed to be under any obligation to furnish capital or even credit. Some of them, from their long services and influence, held double shares, and were allowed to retire from the business at any period of the existing concern with one of those shares, naming any young man in the company's service to succeed him in the other, subject to the approval of the majority of partners. The great success which ultimately

attended the proceedings of the company is attributed greatly to the system pursued with respect to these working partners; after the company became once organized, admission into it was extremely difficult, and had to be obtained by steps which have been thus stated by Mr. Washington Irving.

"A candidate had to enter, as it were, 'before the mast,' to undergo a long probation, and to rise slowly by his merits and services. He began, at an early age, as a clerk, and served an apprenticeship of seven years, for which he received one hundred pounds sterling, was maintained at the expense of the company, and furnished with suitable clothing and equipments. His probation was generally past at the interior trading-post; removed for years from civilized society, leading a life almost as wild and precarious as the savages around him; exposed to the severities of a northern winter, often suffering from a scarcity of food, and sometimes destitute for a long time of both bread and salt. When his apprenticeship had expired, he received a salary according to his deserts, varying from eighty to one hundred and sixty pounds sterling, and was now eligible to the great object of his ambition, a partnership in the company; though years might yet elapse before he attained to that enviable station. Most of the clerks were young men of good families, from the highlands of Scotland, characterized by the perseverance, thrift, and fidelity of their country, and fitted by their native hardihood to encounter the rigorous climate of the north, and to endure the trials and privations of their lot; though it must not be concealed that the constitutions of many of them became impaired by the hardships of the wilderness, and their stomachs injured by occasional famishing, and especially by the want of bread and salt. Now and then, at an interval of years, they were permitted to come down on a visit to the establishment of Montreal, to recruit their health, and to have a taste of civilized life; and these were brilliant spots in their existence."

As the Indians who kill the fur-bearing animals have no use for money, and indeed are unacquainted with its value, they exchange the peltry with the white men for such articles as may be useful or agreeable. It is therefore a part of the fur-traders' business to provide a stock of such articles, and to convey them into the interior. At the period of which we are speaking, when no "Great Westerns" or "British Queens" crossed the Atlantic, and when no steamers voyaged on the great lakes of Canada, the traffic was conducted by the slower method of ship and canoe. One complete interchange of commodities consumed nearly four years to bring about by the following steps:—1st. Sending an order for the goods, from Canada to England; 2nd. Shipping the goods from London;—3rd. Their arrival at Montreal;—4th. Making them up into useful articles and packages at Montreal;—5th. Despatching them off to the interior, by canoe;—6th. Arrival in the Indian country;—7th. Barter with the Indians for furs;—8th. Arrival of the furs at Montreal;—9th. Shipment of the furs at Montreal for the London market. The articles usually ordered for trading with the Indians were such as the following:—Coarse woollen cloth; milled blankets of different sizes; arms and ammunition; tobacco, of various kinds; Manchester goods; linens and coarse sheetings; thread, lines, and twine; common hardware; cutlery and ironmongery of varied kinds; brass and copper kettles; silk and cotton handkerchiefs; hats, shoes and stockings; calicoes and printed cottons; together with numberless trinkets of a less useful but often more attractive kind, such as bells, beads, looking-glasses, &c.

The goods being sent to Canada, were there manufactured or altered into garments, and such other things as were likely to be most acceptable to the Indians. They were then packed in canoes, and consigned to the care of the *voyageurs* or canoe-men, a class of persons so remarkable and so unique as to be worthy of a somewhat minute description.

Canada, like Sweden and a few other countries, is so intersected with lakes, that a canoe can pass from one extremity of it to the other, with scarcely any interruption. Had this not been the case, the fur-trade would probably never have attained the importance which has marked it; for the furs could hardly have been conveyed to the sea-ports from the wild interior without the aid of river navigation. The *courreurs des bois*, formerly alluded to, were employed partly to row the canoes up the rivers, and partly to roam about with the Indians: but when the traffic assumed a more regular character, these men were superseded by others whose duties were more definite; the transactions on land

being intrusted to European agents and Indian hunters, and the management of the canoes being consigned to the *voyageurs*, who were nearly always French Canadians. When the old French trading-houses were broken up, after the cession of Canada to England, the *voyageurs* could but ill adjust themselves to the habits and usages of the conquerors, but by degrees they entered heartily into the service of the North-West Company, to whom they were ever valuable servants.

The dress of these people was a mixture of the civilized and the savage. They wore a capot or surcoat, made of a blanket, a striped cotton shirt, cloth trousers or leathern leggings, moccasins of deer skin, and a belt of variegated worsted, from which were suspended a knife, a tobacco pouch, and other implements. The language of the *voyageurs*, though originally French, became a strange mixture of French, English, and Indian. They seemed to inherit, with their French blood, much of the gaiety and lightness of heart which characterize that nation. They were full of anecdote and song, and ever ready for the dance. One of the most remarkable features in their character was, that instead of acquiring that hardness and grossness of behaviour which men in laborious life are apt to acquire, they had a fund of civility and complaisance; they were mutually obliging and accommodating, interchanging kind offices, and yielding each other assistance and comfort in all the vicissitudes to which they were so much exposed. They were universally submissive and obedient to their employers. They were capable of enduring hardships under which most other classes of men would have sunk, and manifested throughout their troubles an irrepressible cheerfulness. While on long and rough expeditions; while coasting lakes or toiling up rivers; while encamping at night on the borders, and bivouacking in the open air,—they were ever the same gay and care-killing band. As boatmen they were wonderfully expert and enduring; often rowing vigorously from morning till night with scarcely a moment's stoppage. Their French *chansons* formed a never-failing accompaniment to the movement of the oars; the steersman was wont to sing a song, with a regular burden or chorus in which all the rest joined, keeping time with their oars; and if on any rare occasion the men were observed to flag and droop in spirits, a song would immediately bring them back to their wonted joyous tone.

"The Canadian waters," says Mr. Washington Irving, who has described these scenes with his usual felicity of language, "are vocal with these little French chansons, that have been echoed from mouth to mouth, and transmitted from father to son, from the earliest days of the colony; and it has a pleasing effect, in a still, golden, summer evening, to see a batteau gliding across the bosom of a lake, and dipping its oars to the cadence of these quaint old ditties, or sweeping along, in full chorus, on a bright sunny morning, down the transparent current of one of the Canadian rivers." The same writer reminds us that these are scenes which are fast passing away. The march of mechanical invention is driving everything poetical before it. The steam-boats, which are fast dispelling the wildness and romance of the lakes and rivers, are proving as fatal to the race of the Canadian *voyageurs* as they have been to that of the boatmen on the Mississippi. The *voyageurs* are no longer the lords of the Canadian seas and rivers, and the navigators of the wilderness. Some of them may still occasionally be seen coasting the lower lakes with their frail barks, and pitching their camps, and lighting their fires upon the shores; but their range is fast contracting to those remote waters, and shallow and obstructed rivers, unvisited by the steam-boat. Occasionally, when some of our adventurous fellow-countrymen have penetrated to the Arctic Ocean, through the wilds of America, the Canadian *voyageurs* have been hired by them to navigate their canoes through the upper lakes and rivers: such a group we have represented in our cut, as sketched by Captain Basil Hall, shortly after their return from accompanying Captain Franklin on one of his bold and daring expeditions: but an occasional employment like this has no effect on the perpetuation of the race. The *voyageurs* will in the course of years disappear; their songs will die away like the echoes they once awakened; and the whole will be remembered only as themes for local and romantic associations.

But whatever now is, or hereafter may be, the condition of the Canadian *voyageurs*, they were an important and valuable set of men to the North-West Company; and we have now to follow them up the Canadian rivers and lakes. There were about eleven hundred of these men in the service

of the Company; of whom about three hundred and fifty were employed for the summer season, in going from Montreal to Fort William, on Lake Superior. They were hired in Montreal, and were absent from the 1st of May till the end of September. For this trip the guides had from eight hundred to a thousand livres, (a livre being equal to somewhat more than ninepence English,) and a suitable equipment; the foreman and steersman from four to six hundred livres; the middle-men about three hundred livres, with an equipment of one blanket, one shirt, and one pair of trousers. Independent of their wages, they were maintained during that period at the expense of their employers, and were also allowed to traffic on their own account. A portion of this number were engaged to proceed far beyond Fort William, and to winter in the interior country; and these had much higher wages than the others. The main body of the voyageurs were hired by the year, principally for the interior traffic, and were termed "north-men," or "winterers,"—the summer voyageurs being known as "goers and comers," or by the yet stranger name of "pork-eaters." The north-men had higher wages, and a more complete equipment of clothing, than the others, and were generally accompanied by a formidable array of Indian wives and children, who were maintained at the expense of the Company.

When all the goods, intended for the Indian trade, had been carefully packed at Montreal, a sufficient number of canoes were purchased at about three hundred livres each, and fitted out for the expedition. Each canoe carried eight or ten men, with their baggage: sixty or seventy packages of goods; six hundredweight of biscuits; two hundredweight of pork; three bushels of pease; two oil-cloths to cover the goods; gun, bark, and wapate, to repair the canoe; a sail, an axe or two, a towing-line, and sundry small articles. "An European," says Sir Alexander Mackenzie, "on seeing one of these slender vessels thus laden, heaped up, and sunk with her gunwale within six inches of the water, would think his fate inevitable in such a boat, when he reflected on the nature of her voyage; but the Canadians are so expert that few accidents happen."

Montreal stands on the northern bank of the River Saint Lawrence, or, rather, on a small island near the north bank; and as the waters of the great Canadian Lakes are poured into this river, it might be supposed that the fur-traders proceeded at once through the lakes on their way to the interior. But there is a natural obstacle to this arrangement. If the reader inspect a map of Canada, he will perceive that the famed Falls of Niagara are situated between Lakes Erie and Ontario, the water of the former having to descend the falls before it can flow into the latter. To proceed up the lakes by this route is impracticable, and therefore a passage is sought in another direction. The river Ottawa flows into the Saint Lawrence not far from Montreal; and this river furnishes a convenient means, by the aid of a contrivance which we shall presently describe, for conveying a canoe to the upper lakes.

Before the canoes could proceed very far up the Ottawa, at the commencement of the journey falls and rapids were encountered, which gave a foretaste of what would often occur afterwards. Moore's beautiful "Canadian Boat-song" has for its scene this part of the Ottawa, and for its characters the Canadian voyageurs. The canoe-men were accustomed to call by the name of *Décharge* any part of the river where they could not row against the rapid stream. In such case they were obliged to unload their canoes, and carry the goods upon their backs, or, rather, suspended in slings from their heads. Each man's ordinary load was two packages; and the whole of them had to go and return a sufficient number of times for the transfer of all the baggage. The canoe itself was towed up by a strong line. At a place called *Chaudière*, some miles up the Ottawa, the river falls more than twenty feet, up which it is obviously impossible to tow a canoe. Such places, where the canoes as well as the goods had to be carried on the shoulders of the men, were called *Portages*, and occurred frequently in different parts of the fur-trader's route. The portage at *Chaudière* is about six or seven hundred paces in length; and the rock is so steep and difficult of access, that twelve men used to be required to lift each canoe out of the water. The canoe was then carried by six men, two at each end and two in the middle. This transfer was made to a spot where the current was sufficiently tranquil to embark again on the river. It seems hardly credible at the present day, but the historians of the fur-trade assure us that no fewer than forty of these *décharges* and portages occur between Montreal and Huron, at every one of which all the canoes had to be un-

loaded, the goods carried on men's backs, and the canoes either conveyed in a similar manner, or towed up against a strong current. It was in the performance of these laborious and harassing duties that the endurance and cheerfulness of the Canadian voyageurs were found especially valuable; not a murmur of discontent escaped them; but they proceeded with light hearts to accomplish that which could not be avoided.

After entering Lake Huron, the voyageurs coasted along its northern shore, amid innumerable small islands, and at length reached a fort or post at the entrance of Lake Superior. To this fort other goods were occasionally forwarded from Montreal by a totally different route: they were conveyed in boats from Montreal to Kingston at the entrance of Lake Ontario; from thence in ships to Niagara; then overland ten miles, to avoid the Falls; then again by boats to the entrance of Lake Erie; from thence by ship through Lakes Erie and Huron; then overland for a short distance to the entrance of Lake Superior; and lastly over this noble lake by ship. For these purposes the company kept two vessels on Lakes Erie and Huron, and one on Lake Superior, of sixty or seventy tons' burden. This method of conveying goods, &c., from Montreal to Lake Superior, was found to be a less expensive one than that which we have sketched above; but at the same time attended with more risk, and requiring a much longer period. The company therefore adopted one or other method according to the circumstances of the case.

SECTION IV.

FORT WILLIAM.—MEETING OF THE TRADERS.—STYLE OF LIVING.—INLAND JOURNEY FROM FORT WILLIAM.—TRAFFIC WITH THE INDIANS.—BEAVER TRAPPERS.—INDIAN FUR-HUNTERS.—THEIR CACHES.—PERILS OF THE FUR-HUNTERS.

THE company's chief central fort was Fort William, at the north-west shore of Lake Superior, and at a spot which the voyageurs called the Grand Portage, on account of the long distance which the canoes had to be carried after they reached this place. This portage is nearly nine miles over; and each voyageur had to carry eight packages of such goods and provisions as were necessary for the interior country. The company tried both horses and oxen at this duty; but it was found that from various causes the animals were not well adapted to the kind of labour and the nature of the country. Sir Alexander Mackenzie states, that the men became so injured to this duty, that he has known some of them set off with two packages of ninety pounds each, and return with two others of the same weight in the course of six hours, being a distance of eighteen miles over hills and mountains.

The arrangements of the company were so conducted, that the "pork-eaters," or "goers and comers" arrived at Fort William, from Montreal, about the time when the "north-men" or "winterers" arrived from the interior. Only a portion of the northmen, however, thus came in each year; the others remained in the interior; and a section of voyageurs from Montreal were despatched to Rainy Lake, with supplies for these hardy winterers. The northmen who came down to Fort William, brought with them all the furs which had been collected, during a whole twelvemonth; and hence a very busy scene of exchange ensued; the supply of goods being transferred from the Canadian canoes to those which were about to return to the North; while the valuable furs for the obtaining of which so much danger and hardship had been undergone, were made into packages of one hundred pounds weight each, and forwarded to Montreal.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie, who was one of the clerks of the North-West Company at its first establishment, gives a curious picture of the mode of living adopted by these numerous visitors at Fort William, during their brief but busy sojourn at that place. The period to which his narrative applies is about the year 1790. "The proprietors, clerks, guides, and interpreters, mess together, to the number of sometimes an hundred, at several tables in one large hall; the provisions consisting of bread, salt-pork, beef, hams, fish, venison, butter, pease, Indian corn, potatoes, tea, spirits, wine, &c., and plenty of milk, for which purpose several milch cows are constantly kept. The mechanics have rations of such provisions; but the canoe-men, both from the north and from Montreal, have no other allowance here or in the voyage than Indian corn and melted fat. The corn for this purpose is prepared before it leaves Detroit,

by boiling it in a strong alkali which takes off the outer husk; it is then well washed, and carefully dried upon stages, when it is fit for use. One quart of this is boiled for two hours over a moderate fire, in a gallon of water; to which, when it has boiled a short time, are added two ounces of melted suet; this causes the corn to split, and in the time mentioned, makes a pretty thick pudding. If to this is added a little salt (but not before it is boiled, as it would interrupt the operation,) it makes an wholesome palatable food, and easy of digestion. This quantity is fully sufficient for a man's subsistence, during twenty-four hours; though it is not sufficiently heartening to sustain the strength necessary for a state of active labour." Such was the simple and frugal fare on which the Canadian voyageurs chiefly subsisted.

Leaving the "pork-eaters" to return to Montreal with the cargo of furs, we will follow the "northmen" into the interior country. The traffic from Fort William northward was carried on in a manner somewhat different from that hitherto described. The canoes brought from Montreal were too large to be navigated in the chain of small lakes and rivers which extend north-west of Lake Superior; and therefore others about half the size were procured from the natives, and navigated by four, five, or six men, according to the distance which they had to traverse. These small canoes carried, on an average, a lading of about thirty-five packages; of which about two-thirds contained goods to be bartered with the Indians for furs; and one-third contained provisions, stores, and baggage. In each of these canoes was a foreman and a steersman; the one to be always on the look-out, and to direct the passage of the canoe; the other to guide the helm. The foreman had the command of the canoe, and was obeyed in all his directions by the middlemen or rowers. Independent of these, a conductor or pilot was appointed to every five or six canoes, whom they were all obliged to obey, and who was paid liberally, as a person of superior experience. The canoes, thus equipped and manned, embarked on the north side of the Grand Portage, on the river Autout.

Before they were many miles distant from Fort William, the canoe-men had to commence a similar train of operations to those so often necessary near Montreal. At the Carreboëuf Portage, half of the lading of each canoe was taken on shore, and carried by half the crew; while the others rowed the canoe with the remainder of the cargo through a dangerous part of the river for a distance of four miles; then they landed the other half of the cargo, and returned to meet those who were toiling along the shore with the first-mentioned portion of the burden. These portages recur with very great frequency, and were surmounted by similar means, for a very long distance from Lake Superior.

When the canoes arrived at Rainy Lake, they met with one of the forts or factories of the company, at which was repeated, on a much smaller scale, the system of exchanges which had been pursued at Fort William. The canoe-men from Fort William brought to Rainy Lake a supply of goods and provisions for the winterers in the Athabasca country, situated much farther north. These latter could not reach so far as Fort William, and return to Athabasca before the winter set in; and therefore a party of the "pork-eaters" or "goers and comers" were detached from the Montreal party, and sent to meet the "northmen" at Rainy Lake. This being done, and the exchange of goods effected, the former returned to Fort William, and from thence to Montreal; while the latter pursued their way towards the north.

To such an immense distance inland did the agents of the North-West Company pursue their traffic, even so early as the year 1790, that the journey onward from Lake Rainy—itsself situated far beyond the remotest confines of Lake Superior—occupied the canoes a period of two months. Up to this point little was done but toiling up the rivers and lakes, contending with rapids and portages at distances of every few miles; but at Lake Athabasca, the traders divided into different parties, for carrying on a trade with the Indians. Some embarked on the Peace River, to trade with the Beaver and Rocky Mountain Indians; some proceeded to Slave Lake, almost in the frozen regions of the north; another party proceeded to the country surrounding the Elk River; while the remainder trafficked with the Indians near Lake Athabasca.

The mode in which the traders were accustomed to carry on their dealings with the Indians was nearly as follows. In the fall of the year the natives met the traders at the forts, where they bartered the furs or provisions which they

had procured. They then obtained credit for ammunition, traps, &c., and proceeded to hunt the beavers, and other animals; not returning again to the forts till the beginning of the following year. At this time they were again fitted out in a similar manner; and returned a second time with a cargo of furs, about the end of March or the beginning of April. The greater part of the hunters then returned to their country; and lived during the summer with their relations and friends in the enjoyment of that description of plenty which is derived from numerous herds of deer.

The persons who actually kill and capture the beavers are not all Indians. Some of them, under the title of *trappers*, have European blood in their veins, and form a class which is perhaps unique in North America. Mr. Washington Irving has described this class of men with great clearness: and although his narrative relates to a different part of the North American continent, and to another period than that which here occupies our attention, yet the details are so nearly applicable to every phase of the fur-hunting occupation, that we shall avail ourselves of the description in working out our object.

The trappers are generally Canadians by birth, and of French descent, who have been employed for a term of years by some fur-company; but their term being expired, continue to hunt and trap beavers on their own account, trading with the company in the same manner as the Indians. Those who trap in the employ of the company are called simply by the name of *trappers*; while those who thus work on their own account are distinguished by the appellation of *freemen*. Having passed their early youth in the wilderness, separated almost entirely from civilized man, and in frequent intercourse with the Indians, they lapse into the habitudes of savage life with great facility. Though no longer bound by engagements to continue in the interior, they have become so accustomed to the freedom of the forest and the prairie, that they look back with repugnance upon the restraints of civilization. Most of them intermarry with the natives, and like the latter have often a plurality of wives. During their wanderings in the wilderness they lead a precarious and unsettled existence, faring better or worse according to the vicissitudes of the seasons, the migrations of animals, and the plenty or scarcity of game. By exposure to sun and storm, and all kinds of hardships, they come gradually to resemble the Indians in complexion as well as in tastes and habits. From time to time they bring the peltries they have collected to the trading-houses of the company in whose employ they have been brought up; and traffic them away for such articles of merchandize or ammunition as they may stand in need of. At the time when Montreal was the great emporium of the fur-trade, one of these freemen of the wilderness would suddenly return, after an absence of many years, among his old friends and comrades. He would be greeted as one risen from the dead; and with the greater welcome as he returned possessed of much money. A short time, however, spent in revelry, would be sufficient to drain his purse, and set him with civilized life; and he would return with new relish to the unshackled freedom of the forest. Numbers of men of this class were during the palmy days of the North-West Company, scattered throughout the wilds of America. Some of them retained a little of the thrift and forethought of the civilized man, and became wealthy among their improvident neighbours; their wealth being chiefly displayed in the possession of large bands of horses, which covered the prairies in the vicinity of their abodes. Most of these "freemen," however, were prone to assimilate to the Indians, in their regardlessness of the future.

A few words ought also to be said here respecting the Indian fur-hunters, who are, or were employed by the companies much in the same manner as the trappers. These hunters were generally some of the aborigines of Canada who had partially conformed to the habits of civilization, and the doctrines of Christianity, under the earlier colonists of that country. "These half-civilized Indians," says Mr. Irving, "retained some of the good, and many of the evil qualities of their original stock. They were first-rate hunters, and dexterous in the management of the canoe. They could undergo great privations, and were admirable for the service of the rivers, lakes, and forests, provided they could be kept sober, and in proper subordination; but, once inflamed with liquor, to which they were madly addicted, all the dormant passions inherent in their nature were prone to break forth, and to hurry them into the most vindictive and bloody acts of violence." Though they generally pro-

fessed the Roman Catholic religion, yet it was mixed occasionally with some of their ancient superstitions; and they retained much of the Indian belief in charms and omens. Numbers of these men were employed by the North-West Company, as trappers, hunters, and canoe-men, but on lower terms than were allowed to white men.

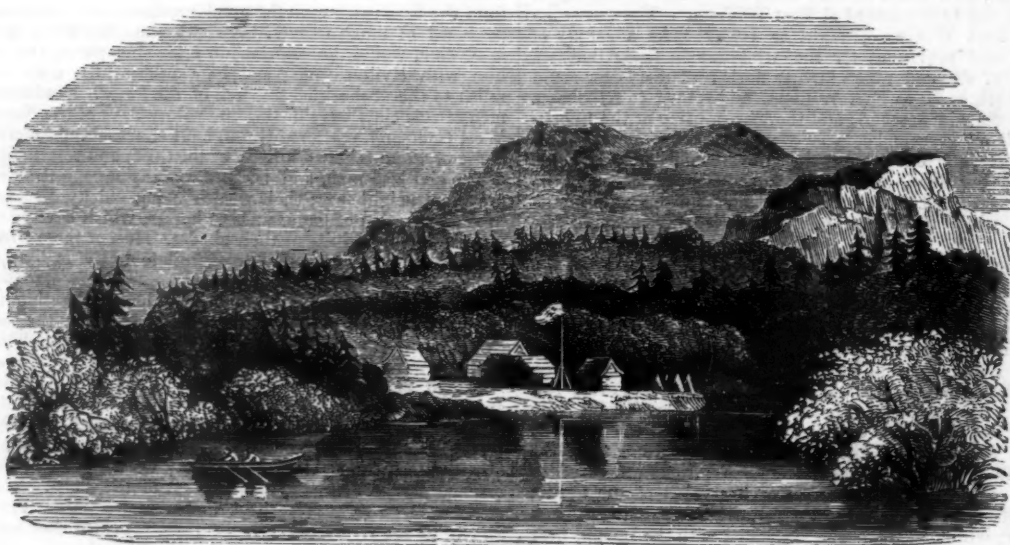
Some of these Indian hunters, in the depths of the wilderness, are hostile to each other; hence arise bitter scenes of strife and often of bloodshed. They are, under such circumstances, not slow in robbing each other's hoards when unprotected; and hence has arisen a singular mode of concealment, when one party of Indians is forced to leave a portion of their property in a spot liable to be visited by a hostile party. A receptacle called a *cache* is formed, so designated by the early French colonists, from the French verb *cacher*, "to conceal," although the method itself was probably known to the Aborigines before the arrival of the French.

The mode of constructing these caches illustrates in a curious manner the native cunning of the Indians. The first care is to seek out a proper situation, which is generally some dry, low bank of clay, on the margin of a water-course. As soon as the precise spot is pitched upon, blankets, saddle-cloths, and other coverings, are spread over the surrounding grass and bushes, to prevent foot-tracks, or any other derangements; and as few hands as possible are employed. A circle of about two feet in diameter is then cut in the sod, which is carefully removed, with the loose soil immediately beneath it, and laid aside in a place where it will be safe from anything that will change its appearance. The uncovered area is then dug perpendicularly to the depth of about three feet, being made gradually wider as it descends, till a conical chamber six or seven feet deep is formed. The whole of the earth displaced by this process, being of a different colour from that on the surface, is handed up in a vessel, and heaped into a skin or cloth, in which it is conveyed to the stream, and thrown into the midst of the current, that it may be entirely carried off. Should the cache not be formed in the vicinity of a stream, the earth thrown up is carried to a distance, and scattered in such a manner as not to leave the minutest trace. The cave, or cache, being formed, it is well lined with dry grass, bark, sticks, and poles, and occasionally a dried hide. The property intended to be hidden is then laid in, after having been well aired: a hide is spread over it, and dried grass, brush, and stones, thrown in, and trampled down until the pit is filled to the top. The loose soil, which had been put aside, is then brought, and rammed down firmly, to prevent its sinking: and the surface is sprinkled with water, to destroy the scent, lest the wolves and bears should be attracted to the place, and root up the concealed treasure. When the neck of the cache is nearly level with the surrounding surface,

the sod is again fitted in with the utmost exactness, and any bushes, stalks, or stones, that may have originally been about the spots are restored to their former places. The blankets and other coverings are then removed from the surrounding herbage: all tracks are obliterated: the grass is gently raised by the hand to its natural position; and the minutest chip or straw is scrupulously gleaned up and thrown into the stream. After all is done, the place is abandoned for the night, and, if all be right next morning, is not visited again until there be a necessity for re-opening the cache. Four men are sufficient in this way to conceal the amount of three tons' weight of provisions or merchandise, in the course of two days. Such are the extreme precautions which these people take, to preserve their property from depredation in a land where the laws and usages of civilised life are unknown.

The privations and trials to which the trappers and hunters are exposed during their wanderings, are by no means confined to hunger, cold, and fatigue; they are frequently attacked by grizzly bears, whose enormous bulk, and tenacity of life, make them formidable antagonists. As an example of this, we will quote a passage from Mr. Irving, in which he details an adventure to which a hunter or trapper, named Cannon, was exposed in the heart of America.

Cannon had just had the good fortune to kill a buffalo, and as he was at a considerable distance from his camp, he cut out the tongue and some of the choice bits, made them into a parcel, and, slinging them on his shoulders by a strap passed round his forehead, as the voyageurs carry packages of goods, set out on his way to the camp. "In passing through a narrow ravine, he heard a noise behind him, and looking round, beheld, to his dismay, a grizzly bear in full pursuit, apparently attracted by the scent of the meat. Cannon had heard so much of the invulnerability of this tremendous animal that he never attempted to fire, but, slipping the strap from his forehead, let go the buffalo meat and ran for his life. The bear did not stop to regale himself with the game, but kept on after the hunter. He had nearly overtaken him, when Cannon reached a tree, and throwing down his rifle, scrambled up it. The next instant Bruin was at the foot of the tree; but as this species of bear does not climb, he contented himself with turning the chase into a blockade. Night came on. In the darkness Cannon could not perceive whether or not the enemy maintained his station; but his fears pictured him rigorously mounting guard. He passed the night, therefore, in the tree, a prey to dismal fancies. In the morning the bear was gone. Cannon warily descended the tree, gathered up his gun, and made the best of his way back to the camp, without venturing to look after his buffalo meat."



TRADING POST ON THE RIVER AUX RATS.